



# Olympia City Council Referral Request

Date of Referral	Nov. 10, 2015
Originator	Mayor Stephen Buxbaum
Referral To	The Arts Commission and a subsequent report and recommendation to the General Government Committee in early 2016.
Request	<p>Investigate the creation of a City of Olympia Poet Laureate.</p> <p>There is interest on the part of local poetry societies and the Library to support the designation of a City of Olympia Poet Laureate. This would be an unpaid, honorary designation. Volunteers in the community are willing to step forward to assist in helping research the development of such a position and a process for applications. In particular, the Olympia Poetry Network (OPN), has expressed their commitment and attention to the following issues and interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A poet laureate for the city of Olympia</li><li>• Diversifying the poetry community, both in terms of poets and listeners/supporters. This could include doing outreach and events at schools, and various community organizations, such as CIELO, Nisqually NWR, etc.</li><li>• Connecting the various poetry groups in Olympia and doing some joint events, such as a city-wide poetry festival (in addition to OPN's monthly readings at Traditions, the Evergreen State College affiliated Old Growth Collective has weekly spoken word events and <i>poetry slams</i> at Ben Moore's that attracts a mostly younger crowd. There's beginning to be a little cross-pollination of the groups, which is hopeful in terms of fostering a wider poetry presence in Olympia)</li></ul> <p>Other cities, including Tacoma, have a poet laureate program. The Arts Commission, as reflected in our Comprehensive Plan, has interest and intent to expand interest in the arts - moving into performing arts was one of the expressed goals. Tapping into the interest and commitment of local associations, such as the members of the OPN and faculty from local colleges and universities is appropriate to help meet this goal.</p> <p>Any initial appointment of a poet laureate should have a clear vision for the position and plan for implementation. This is an exciting time for poets and poetry, ignited by the youth-driven spoken word movement and enlivening traditional literary poetry. Poetry has taken to the streets, the classroom, coffee houses and living rooms - it would be wonderful to see a more formal expansion and support of these developments in the State's Capital City.</p>

Options	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investigate and recommend the creation of a honorary, unpaid City of Olympia Poet Laureate</li> <li>2. Investigate and recommend not creating a Poet Laureate</li> <li>3. Investigate and recommend an alternative approach to creating a Poet Laureate</li> </ol>
Timing	Creation of a report and recommendation to the General Government Committee in early 2016.
Attachments	None